

current. Without one organization to collect, analyze, and report statewide information on water and wastewater infrastructure, a statewide understanding of the types and significance of infrastructure needs is compromised. The lack of an organization to implement a statewide strategic plan results in the inability to set funding priorities and also may hinder planning responses to droughts.

In addition to the Rural Center surveys, the United States Environmental Protection Agency conducts needs surveys on water and wastewater infrastructure every four years. These surveys aim to capture a statewide picture of future infrastructure needs in order to compile a list of anticipated costs to install, upgrade, or replace infrastructure. These surveys compile the type and estimated cost of infrastructure needs over the next 20 years but do not collect information on the condition of current systems. This information provides a statewide inventory of existing needs and the cost of addressing them. However, a complete inventory does not exist. Without this information, a statewide understanding of the types, significance, and prioritization of needs across the state cannot be determined.

DENR collects statewide information on water quality and quantity, but these efforts only contain limited, if any, information on infrastructure, and the information is not used in the funding process. Information on water quantity is provided through the local water supply plans—assessment of the water system's current and future water needs and its ability to meet those needs—that every unit of local government must submit at least every five years. DENR's Source Water Assessment program delineates source water areas, inventories potential contaminants, and determines the susceptibility of each public water supply to contamination. The Basinwide Planning Program collects water quality information from each of the state's 17 major river basins. Both of these programs collect information related to water quantity and water quality in North Carolina, but neither focus on the state's water and wastewater infrastructure.

**The lack of a statewide strategic plan has resulted in inconsistent funding.** Without a statewide strategic plan, the North Carolina General Assembly cannot determine the amount and type of money that should be provided each year or fund the highest priorities during revenue shortfalls. As a result, funding for water and wastewater infrastructure has been appropriated based on individual funding agencies' requests rather than based on a statewide strategic plan. Current planning is conducted largely by entities in isolation from one another; each bases its decisions on separate guidelines and procedures. Under a strategic plan, each entity's rules, goals, and objectives would be considered together and examined for gaps and overlaps from a statewide perspective. A statewide strategic plan would identify and prioritize statewide water and wastewater infrastructure needs and determine the amount and type of funding required.

**State and local roles are not well defined for water and wastewater infrastructure funding.** A statewide strategic plan would clarify the state's role in providing financing for water and wastewater infrastructure owned and operated at the local level. There are several examples in North Carolina where state and local roles for planning, financing, construction,